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AUTHOR Stuckey, Sherry; Berardinelli, Paula
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ABSTRACT

Using the results of a literature search, a conceptual framework is developed for comparing the schools of philosophical thought with the aims, methods, curriculum, and teacher-learner relationships found in training and development programs in business and industry. From this analysis, a philosophy for the field of training and development can be proposed. Schools of philosophical thought examined include behaviorism-behavioristic, existentialism-humanistic, idealism-liberal, pragmatism-progressive-cognitive, realism-analytic, and reconstructionism-radical. The current philosophy of training and development contends that the philosopher of education is interested in these principles of education: aims and objectives, curriculum or subject matter, general methodological principles, and an analysis of the teaching-learning process. However, actual practice in training and development is inconsistent with this governing philosophy. Therefore, the training and development field must move decisively toward a reconstructionist philosophy, with some contextual changes. The two major premises of reconstructionism are as follows: (1) society is in need of constant change; and (2) such social change involves both a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society. From the viewpoint of training, the philosophy becomes the following: business is in need of constant change, and such change involves a reconstruction of training and the use of training in reconstructing business. From this point, the aims, method, curriculum, and teacher-learner relationship can be constructed. (26 references) (KC)

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THE SEARCH FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Prepared by

Sherry Stuckey
Paula Berardinelli
North Carolina State University
Training & Development Program
Raleigh, North Carolina

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INTRODUCTION

While participants in a graduate course on the Philosophy of Occupational Education, the authors were challenged to discover and report on the Philosophy of Training and Development. This paper reflects the authors' exploration of the literature and query of select scholars in the field.

Literature searches were conducted using the ERIC Database on Compact Disk, Business Indexes, and two leading Training and Development textbooks (Craig, 1987; & Nadler, 1984). Discussions with the resource staff at the national headquarters of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), a review of ASTD's foundation document, Models for HRD Practice (McLagan, 1989), and interviews with the program head of Training and Development at a large southeastern university (Dillon, 1989) were also employed.

Most of the statements related to the philosophy of training and development were of an operational nature, and one cohesively written philosophical statement was not evident. The most closely related philosophical material was found in the literature on Human Resource Development and Adult Education.

Training and Development advocates many of the theories of adult education. Malcolm Knowles (1984), the Father of Andragogy, cites the influences of Eduard

Lindeman, a pragmatist, and Carl Rogers, an existentialist, and the thinking of behaviorists in identifying research that has shaped adult education theory. Nadler (1984) also cites Lindeman as having "one of the most insightful and inspiring works on the literature of adult education". He believes the philosophies of behaviorism, pragmatism, and existentialism form a base for training and development and have relevance to the field.

McKenzie (1985) suggests that the philosophical orientations of adult educators are rooted in professional practice and derive more from concrete experiences in organizational settings than from logical analysis of the evaluation of abstract philosophical arguments. McKenzie (1985) also found that business and industry trainers had more progressive and behaviorist orientations than other educators of adults.

This paper will provide a conceptual framework for comparing the schools of philosophical thought with the aims, methods, curriculum, and teacher/learner relationships found in Training and Development programs in Business and Industry. Following this analysis, the authors propose their philosophy for the field of Training and Development.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The conceptual framework presented in this paper is based on the following operational definitions and assumptions of training and development. For the purpose of this paper similar philosophical schools of thought have been combined into hyphenated titles.

DEVELOPMENT - is learning for growth of the individual but not related to a specific present or future job (Nadler, 1984).

EDUCATION - is learning to prepare the individual for a different but identified job (Nadler, 1984).

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT - organized learning experiences in a definite time period to increase the possibility of improving job performance and growth (Nadler, 1984).

PHILOSOPHY - the study of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct. The study of the basic concepts of a particular branch of knowledge. a system of principles for guidance in practical affairs (Stein, 1978).

SOCIETY - refers to the corporate arena of business and industry, not society in general.

TRAINING - is a field related to adult and occupational education in its emphasis on skills and workers, but is not completely defined within either scope. Nadler (1984) defines training as learning related to the present job.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - in America has attempted to be the bridge between education and work (Worthington, 1981).

SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT -

BEHAVIORISM-BEHAVIORISTIC

AIMS: Generally considered a psychological theory, behavior is caused by environmental conditions, all behavioral phenomena are capable of being explained in terms of matter and motion (Ozmon & Craver, 1986). The focus is on behavioral modification, learning through reinforcement, and instructional management by objectives (Elias & Merriam, 1980).

METHODS: Programmed instruction, Computer-assisted instruction, and contract learning (Sakata, 1984). Behaviorist strategies are preferred in situations where employees need to learn basic (specific) skills (Nadler, 1984).

CURRICULUM: Competency based education (Sakata, 1984).

TEACHER/LEARNER: The learner is very active and assumes responsibility for learning while the teacher designs the environment that elicits desired behaviors (Sakata, 1984). Produce proscribed behaviors that the teacher decides the learner should perform (Nadler, 1984).

EXISTENTIALISM-HUMANISTIC

AIMS: Emphasizes the individual (Moore, 1988). A protest type of philosophy that uses phenomenology as a method for describing the lived experience and hermeneutics as the interpretive approach to individual experience. (Ozmon & Craver, 1986). Embraces principles that view education in terms of enhanced personal growth and development (Elias & Merriam, 1980). Encourage each individual to develop to his or her full, unique potential (Nadler, 1984).

METHODS: Self-evaluation (Sakata, 1984). When more complex and self-developmental operations are involved, humanistic strategies are preferred (Nadler, 1984).

CURRICULUM: Emphasis on the emotional and affective aspects of the personality (Sakata, 1984).

TEACHER/LEARNER: The learner identifies his or her own needs and the teacher helps the student meet those needs. People have a natural tendency to learn and that learning will take place if a nourishing and encouraging environment is provided (Sakata, 1984).

IDEALISM-LIBERAL

AIMS: Values thinking (ideas) and places much emphasis on the cognitive domain (Moore, 1988). Belief that ideas are the only true reality (Ozmon & Craver, 1986). Emphasizes the transmission of a body of organized knowledge and the development of intellectual powers (Elias & Merriam, 1980).

METHODS: The use of lecture method and dialectic (Sakata, 1984).

CURRICULUM: Intellectual (Humanities and the Classics), moral education, spiritual knowledge and aesthetics (Sakata, 1984).

TEACHER/LEARNER: The teacher has a prominent role in the educational process by attempting to lead people from information to knowledge to wisdom (Sakata, 1984).

PRAGMATISM-PROGRESSIVE-COGNITIVE

AIMS: Strives to prepare people to live in the world as it exists. Ideas and facts are applied to real world problems (Moore, 1988). Encourages us to seek out the processes and do the things that work best to help us achieve desirable ends. Examines traditional ways of thinking and doing, and where possible and desirable, to reconstruct our approach to life more in line with the human needs of today (Ozmon & Craver, 1986). Stresses learning as problem-solving, the acquisition of practical skills and the promotion of social change (Elias & Merriam, 1980). Teach the brain to engage in critical thinking and problem solving

(Nadler, 1984).

METHODS: Learning by experience, needs assessment, and problem-solving (Sakata, 1984). When cognitive operations are involved, didactic teaching is preferred (Nadler 1984).

CURRICULUM: Vocational and utilitarian training (Sakata, 1984). Problem-centered learning, core-curriculum, project method, problems approach (Ozmon & Craver, 1986).

TEACHER/LEARNER: The focus is on the personal needs, interests, and experiences of the learner (Sakata, 1984).

REALISM-ANALYTIC

AIMS: Favors the sciences and studies of actual objects and naturally occurring phenomena (Moore, 1988). Concerned primarily with the need to clarify concepts and arguments used in theoretical discourse (Elias & Merriam, 1980).

METHODS: Lecture, supervised study (Moore, 1988).

CURRICULUM: Physical world, Math and Science (Moore, 1988).

TEACHER/LEARNER: The teacher is the lecturer and demonstrator and the learner is a sensing mechanism (Moore, 1988).

RECONSTRUCTIONISM-RADICAL

AIMS: Focuses on the future and reform of social ills (Moore, 1988). Society is in need of constant reconstruction and change, and social change involves both a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society (Ozmon & Craver, 1986). Has as its major theme the initiation of social, political, and economic change (Elias & Merriam, 1980).

METHODS: Futuristic problem-solving (Elias & Merriam, 1980).

CURRICULUM: Cutting-edge information needed to correct current societal problems and build a new society (Elias & Merriam, 1980).

TEACHER/LEARNER: Both serve as agents of social change (Elias & Merriam 1980).

CURRENT PHILOSOPHY OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Elias and Merriam (1980) contend that the philosopher of education is interested in certain principles that are involved in education: aims and objectives of education, curriculum or subject matter, general methodological principles, and an analysis of the teaching-learning process.

Aims

To increase the possibility of improving job performance and/or growth (individual and within the organization). Improved job performance leads to improved company performance (Nadler, 1984). Eurich (1985) states that the ultimate concern of corporate education is productivity and performance. He sees individual growth as being specifically connected to company performance. Corporations are not deliberately, or altruistically, in the business of employee education; they are in production of goods and services. However, to perform well, they may have been forced to educate.

Methods

The andragogical model values the learner's life experiences as a rich resource for learning and asserts that adults learn in order to be able to perform a task, solve a problem, or live in a more satisfying way (Knowles, 1984). Regarding motivation to learn, Knowles (1984) acknowledges the behavioral orientation toward external motivators, such as a better job, but maintains that the more potent motivators are internal, such as self-actualization.

Teaching methods in the corporate classroom are often less revolutionary and experimental than might be expected in high technology corporate settings, however, the emphasis is on efficiency, variety and flexibility (Eurich, 1985). The top two most frequently selected methods for training were videotape and lecture (Lee, 1987). Methods, surveyed by Training (Lee, 1987), and frequency of response are as follows:

videotapes	83.2%
lectures	82.5%
one-to-one instruction	73.2%
role plays	52.9%
slides	46.8%
films	44.9%
case studies	42.8%
games/simulations	40.6%
self-assessment/testing instruments	35.7%
noncomputerized self-study	31.5%
teleconferencing (audio/video)	20.3%
teleconferencing (audio only)	10.5%
computer conferencing	5.3%

Curriculum

The corporate classroom curriculum has broadened considerably in recent years (Eurich, 1985). Courses of study now seek to educate the whole person and to put the work of industry in a larger social, economic, and political context (Eurich, 1985). The corporate curriculum includes five major areas:

* basic skills instruction;
* management and executive training;
* technical and scientific study;
* sales, service, and customer training; and
* general education (Eurich 1985).

A 1987 Training survey found that the most frequently provided subject matter in organizations with fifty or more employees were management development, followed by supervisory skills, communication skills, and technical skills (Lee, 1987).

Teacher/Learner Relationship

Not much information was available on this topic. However, closely related is the General Electric comparison of the collegiate teacher-learner relationship to the supervisor-employee relationship in the workplace. In the corporation, the supervisor knows the problem, employees learn to get an answer to the problem, and they solve problems to get results (Eurich, 1985).

In Figure 1, the specific aims, methods, curriculum, and teacher-learner relationships found within training and development in business and industry are compared with the philosophical schools of thought. The training and related literature overwhelmingly advocates a pragmatic philosophy - improve job and company performance. However, after an examination of the philosophical orientations there is a proclivity toward a combination of idealist, pragmatist, and existentialist methods. While the curriculum is represented in almost every area and the teacher/learner relationship tends to include more idealist approaches. This inconsistency between the governing philosophy and actual practice in training and development is startling.

In the next section the authors make several recommendations for reconciling these disparities between the model philosophy and the operational philosophy. The authors advocate a reconstructionist philosophy which represents a major paradigm shift from the current philosophy of Training and Development.

A RECONSTRUCTIONIST PHILOSOPHY OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Major Premises

The philosophy that we believe the training and development field is moving toward, and must move toward decisively, is the reconstructionist philosophy, with some contextual changes. The two major premises of reconstructionism are:

FIGURE 1: APPLICATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT	AIMS	METHODS	CURRICULUM	TEACHER/LEARNER RELATIONSHIP
Idealism-Liberal		Videotape, Slides, Film, Teleconferencing, Lecture, One to One Instruction, Computer Conferencing	General Education	Transmitter of Knowledge, Manager, Supervisor, Trainer Lecturer, Demonstrator/ Subordinate, Participant
Realism-Analytic		Lecture	Technical and Scientific Study	
Behaviorism-Behavioristic			Basic Skills, Sales, Service, Customer Training	
Pragmatism-Progressive	Individual Growth, Performance of Company	Experience, Problem-Centered Learning, Role Plays, Self-Assessments, Games, Simulations, Case Studies	Social, Economic & Political Issues, Basic Skills, Sales, Service, Customer Training	Partners in Learning
Existentialism-Humanistic	Individual Growth	Self-Study, Self-Directed Learning, Computer Based Training, Programmed Instruction		
Reconstrictionism-Radical				Facilitator, Consultant/ Client

(1) society is in need of constant reconstruction or change, and (2) such social change involves both a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society (Ozmon and Craver, 1986, p. 134).

The context for this paper is training and development, as opposed to the broader field of education, and American business and industry, as opposed to society in general. Thus, the two major premises become: (1) business is in need of constant reconstruction or change, and (2) such change involves both a reconstruction of training and development and the use of training and development in reconstructing business. (While it would be ideal if training and development and American businesses were primarily concerned with societal change at a broad level, this seems to be a far stretch given the capitalist system of profit as the bottom line, not societal improvement.)

Although no articles were found in the training and development and business literatures that referred to the philosophy of reconstructionism directly, there were numerous articles that alluded to the two major premises as state above. From that base, the reconstructionist philosophy for training and development was extrapolated, including aims, methods, curriculum, and teacher/learner relationship.

Recent trends in the literature reflect a movement toward reconstruction in American business and training and development. American business and training and development are striving to make major paradigm shifts to be successful in a rapidly changing world.

Relevant to the first premise, there is a resounding call for transformational changes in business. Everything in the business environment seems to be in a constant state of flux, and a proliferation of articles cited the kinds of issues business must face. Those issues included: tough global competition, downsizing, a shrinking pool of new workers, diversity in the workplace (greater numbers of workers who are women, minorities, and the elderly), the information age, tasks that require increasing levels of technical skill, and a wide gap between job requirements and the skills of workers (Eurich, 1985; Hallett, 1988; Nussbaum, 1988; Sonnenfeld, 1985; Yeomans, 1989). The answers to how business must change are still being explored. It is clear that the training and development field will be affected by the changes that are occurring in the business world. Training and development has a great opportunity to not only change with businesses, but to help businesses make those changes.

There are signs in the literature that members of the training and development field are thinking about the field's own reconstruction and how the field can influence business in its change process. Several recent articles (Hallett, 1988; Yeomans, 1989) address the need for major renewal in the field and outline ways to achieve major change. It is also significant that the updated version of the most significant study in the field on roles and competencies, Models for HRD Practice, has expanded the role of training professionals to include organizational development and career development as well as training (McLagan, 1989). These additions reflect a paradigm shift in the thinking of training and development professionals.

The training and development field's ability to influence business in its change process was a subject in many of the articles about changes in business in general and in articles on training and development's need for changes (Eurich, 1985; Gordon, 1987; Hallett, 1988; Lee, 1987; Modic, 1989; Nussbaum, 1988; Sonnenfeld, 1985; Yeomans, 1989). The trend is toward greater emphasis by American business on human resources to achieve higher levels of productivity and quality in the 1990's. The training and development function can potentially have a major role in helping businesses make the most of their human resources, particularly given the trend toward wider gaps between job requirements and workers' skills. In support of that role, surveys by Training magazine for 1984-87 indicate that top management's view of the importance of training to the organization's success seems to be growing steadily (Gordon, 1987).

ELEMENTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY

Overview

Having established support for the two major premises of a reconstructionist philosophy for training and development, the philosophical elements of aims, methods, curriculum, and teacher/learner relationship need to be described. Many of these concepts are a synthesis between ideas found in the literature regarding the renewal of training and development and major ideas of reconstructionist philosophy of education as found in Ozmon and Craver (1986). After each element of the training and development philosophy is described, its parallels to the broader reconstructionist philosophy of education will be

drawn.

Figure 2 summarizes the elements of a training and development reconstructionist philosophy.

FIGURE 2: ELEMENTS OF A RECONSTRUCTIONIST PHILOSOPHY

AIMS	METHODS	CURRICULUM	TEACHER/LEARNER RELATIONSHIP
need for change	reposition T&D in the organization	cutting edge information	providers and seekers of information
prepare for future	link T&D to strategic planning	evolving needs of employees	change agents
	form alliances		
	use futuristic problem-solving		
	take a lifelong learning approach		
	make diversity a theme of training		

Aims

The aims of training and development need to reflect the facts that the business environment is changing rapidly and businesses are recognizing that change is becoming a way of life. Training and development professionals must anticipate the needs of tomorrow and prepare to be productive in the new environment. Jeffrey Hallett, in an article on

"worklife visions" (1988), succinctly captures the situation for the training and development profession in his statement that it is not enough to "patch the existing systems, allocate more resources to them, or to bring higher levels of pay and respect to teachers. We are in a new economy and we need a new approach to education and training that is directed toward the demands of this new time". He goes on to state that the purpose of training and education should be "to prepare individuals as fully as possible to contribute to their maximum potential within the current and future economy".

The idea of promoting change and preparing for the future in order to make individuals and businesses more productive has a clear parallel in the broader reconstructionist philosophy of education, where "the idea of promoting change is based on the notion that individuals and society can be made better" (Ozmon and Craver, 1986).

Methods

There are numerous methods that training and development can use to renew itself and to help businesses be more effective in the future environment. Each method listed in the table has several ideas linked to it, and many of these ideas are connected to each other.

Repositioning training and development in the organization means finding ways to make it an integral part of the business, just like manufacturing and marketing are. Suggestions for accomplishing this integration include: giving the line organization more responsibility for training, which includes training managers to function as trainers and

developers of employees; making training and development part of performance appraisals; setting standards for training, which means that each employee receives a given number of hours of training per year; and having training and development staff stop thinking of themselves as training professionals and start thinking of themselves as business people, which includes showing how training contributes to the bottom line of the business and learning the language of business (Yeomans, 1989).

Another method by which the training and development function can help businesses prepare for the future is to have training and development staff involved in strategic planning for the organization. Traditionally, training and development has not been involved with strategic planning and consulting with top management, but there is strong support for training and development's involvement (Buller, 1988; Jamieson, 1982; Yeomans, 1989). In addition, training and development must links its goals to the strategic goals of the organization.

Two categories of alliances that would be helpful to training and development in achieving its aims are alliances with senior management and with schools and colleges (Yeomans, 1989). Support from senior management is critical if training and development is to become an integrated function in organizations and if it is to lead the organization in changing for tomorrow's world. In recent years, senior management has begun to recognize the importance of training and developing its human resources, but there is still room for improvement.

Businesses, faced by the overwhelming challenges of global competition, diversity in the workplace, rapid technological changes, and gaps between job requirements and workers' skills, are seeking creative alternatives to educating and training the workforce. One of the ways this can be accomplished is through alliances with schools and colleges. Clearly, the training and development function should be closely involved in forging relationships with educational institutions.

Some of the ways alliances with educational institutions are being built by businesses include: inviting college faculty to teach courses at business sites; offering tuition assistance to employees to take courses/get degrees at educational institutions; developing curricula with local community colleges and universities to be offered through training and development departments; encouraging schools to offer the kinds of courses that teach knowledge and skills that are needed in the business world; and working with school systems to help them improve the overall quality of education and deal with problems such as drug use and drop-out rates. Another way that some businesses are dealing with educating the workforce is through establishing their own degree-granting institutions. It seems that there are questions as to whether this is a cooperative strategy or a hindering one in relation to educational institutions.

Another key method for training and development to use in transforming itself as well as helping businesses change is futuristic problem-solving. That means recognizing the complexity of organizational systems, taking a long term view, and using an integrated,

interdisciplinary approach to problems. In transforming itself, training and development must go beyond a structured program mentality to a capacity to provide training on demand to meet the wide ranging educational needs of employees. Training and development staff members will need to think of themselves as information/resource providers. They must also encourage individuals throughout the business to employ futuristic problem-solving techniques.

There are a number of aspects of training and development to which futuristic problem-solving can be applied. In the area of how training is provided, trainers must to think of alternatives to traditional classroom training and take advantage of high technology. Training needs to travel to individuals as an integrated part of the work environment, by means of satellite, for example. Activities such as simulations and outdoor experiential programs are being shown to be effective means of learning. And, as access to information becomes more widespread and a key to success, trainers need to encourage individuals to become informal teachers and learners with each other.

To become corporate problem-solvers, trainers need to be involved with more than training. They need to take an integrated approach that incorporates concepts from organizational development, career development, performance management, and training and development. An integrated approach will require more consulting and attendance at line manager meetings, for example. This is a major shift from the traditional training and development vehicle of the workshop.

Training and development staff members can also help management be non-traditional in its thinking about its own approaches. For example, are there new forms of management that are needed to meet today's needs and the unknowns of tomorrow? Concomitantly, are there new approaches to management development that should be considered? (Yeomans, 1989).

Another major method that can help training and development achieve its aims is to take a lifelong approach to teaching and learning. In the information age, education needs to be ageless, according to Hallett's futuristic view (1988). Because change is so rapid and knowledge becomes obsolete so quickly, education must be a lifelong endeavor. The linear system of elementary, secondary, post-secondary, graduate, and post-graduate education will be replaced by a high technology approach that allows access by all to information, at a learning pace that is individual. This represents a major paradigm shift that challenges the structure of prerequisites and age and democratizes access to knowledge. In the future, the goal of training and development in business will be to maximize the spread of information and knowledge, determined by the needs and interests of individuals.

It has been noted that tomorrow's workforce will be diverse, with more women, minorities, and the elderly, and that businesses will compete globally and have international locations. Another method that training and development can use to help businesses develop their employees effectively is the use of diversity as a theme. Based on the assumption that there are cultural differences, employees will need multicultural education information to

understand each other. Trainers will have to take a culturally based approach to training and communication, and will have to encourage individuals to do the same. For example, the Euro-American view of knowledge is cognitive: one knows through counting and measuring; the African, Afro-American, and Hispanic view of knowledge is affective: one knows through symbolic imagery and rhythm; the Asian and Asian-American view of knowledge is conative: one knows through striving toward transcendence (Nichols, 1985). Thus, in tomorrow's business environment, diversity in cultures and learning styles must be recognized as a key to helping individuals communicate and learn.

Many aspects of the methods just discussed are relevant to methods of the reconstructionist philosophy of education. It is important to challenge methods that have been used in the past, to apply futuristic problem-solving, to provide opportunities to learn outside of the traditional classroom setting, and to take a lifelong approach to learning. Because the focus of this paper is on business, not society, the reconstructionist focus on arousing interest in public activism is not applicable. However, businesses certainly do want to arouse employee interest in the business!

Curriculum

The curriculum in a training and development reconstructionist philosophy has been alluded to in discussion of methods. Because of rapid technological change and obsolescence of knowledge, cutting edge information will be the curriculum of tomorrow. Businesses will be making changes as a way of life, and employees will need to be trained and retrained to

keep pace with those changes.

A diverse base of employees will also have evolving, varied needs for education and training. Training will be needed on topics that range from literacy to robotics to cultural differences. Some of the training that in the past has been viewed as "soft skill," such as team building and stress management, will be precisely the skills that are needed to sustain a high performance organization in the future's turbulent times (Hallett, 1988). And, as the post-war baby boomers age, they are asking businesses to facilitate career planning and even provide training on the topic of personal enhancement outside of work (Sonnenfeld, 1985). If the assumption is correct that when people's needs are met, they perform better, then the curriculum should be designed to meet the evolving, whole-person needs of individuals.

There are several parallels between curriculums of the reconstructionist philosophies of education and of training and development. The curriculum of the reconstructionist philosophy in education emphasizes a "world" curriculum that addresses social problems, other cultures, and has a future orientation. The curriculum also has a bias toward action to get students to use what they learn (Ozmon and Craver, 1986). The training and development reconstructionist philosophy has a curriculum that focuses on business problems, is concerned with cultural diversity, and has a futuristic orientation. In its focus on cutting edge information and meeting the evolving needs of employees, it also has a bias toward providing training and education that can be usefully applied to make individuals and businesses more effective.

Teacher/Learner Relationship

In the reconstructionist philosophy of training and development, both teachers (trainers) and learners (employees) will be providers and seekers of information. The training and development function needs to become a resource center, an aggressive seeker of new knowledge and new mechanisms for making information available to individuals (Hallett, 1988). The employees, as learners, need to also aggressively seek new knowledge and find ways to share knowledge with each other effectively, hence providing information to each other. In the future, it will be the young, and sometimes uncredentialed, who know the most about high technology (Hallett, 1988). Those who know about technology and information systems will be spread throughout corporation, and it is training and development's job to help these individuals teach others, both formally and informally. The role of teachers and learners will also be as change agents. Trainers will be focused on changing their own thinking and approaches as well as helping businesses and individuals change. It has been made clear that employees will also need to focus on continually updating their own knowledge, skills, and attitudes as part of the process of changing the business to meet environmental challenges.

Both the reconstructionist philosophy of education and the reconstructionist philosophy of training and development favor the role of change agent for teachers and learners. In both philosophies, it is the teacher's role to question the current system of education, to be flexible, and to remain "on the cutting edge" of knowledge by being forward-looking in perspective. It is optimal for the teacher to create a democratic experience, where the

learner makes choices and learns from his/her own experiences.

CONCLUSION

Training and development professionals have a major challenge to make the aims, methods, curriculum, and teacher/learner relationship of a reconstructionist philosophy a reality. Many of the elements of the reconstructionist philosophy threaten traditional behaviors in organizations and in our educational systems. Authors who are proposing transformations in training and development, such as Yeomans (1989) and Hallett (1988), question training departments' commitment to helping American businesses become globally dominant. Yeomans quotes Noel Tichy, professor at the University of Michigan, who believes that, based on past and present roles, "trainers will be the group that is least innovative in coming up with changes in the 1990's. They have a vested interest in putting on formal training programs and are disconnected from the top of the organization" (p. 78).

The need for training and development has grown so fast and so dramatically that training departments have a lot of creative work to do to effectively meet the needs of businesses in the coming decades. In this creative work, trainers will often face barriers from current systems. These authors believe, however, that the reconstructionist philosophy makes eminent sense for training and development given the current and anticipated business environment. We hope that the training and development field is up to the challenge, for the rewards will be great.

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